

REMARKS

In the above-identified Office Action all of the claims were rejected as being anticipated by the cited Egawa '726 reference, which is Applicant's earlier patent. By this response, however, the two independent claims in the application, Claims 1 and 8, have been amended to stress the inventive feature which is believed to distinguish the present invention from the prior art.

In particular, Claims 1 and 8 are directed to a photoelectric conversion apparatus and a distance measuring apparatus, respectively, wherein a first transfer unit transfers signals from a sensor array, and a second transfer unit integrates signals from the first transfer unit. More specifically, the first transfer unit transfers sequentially therein first signals from the sensor array in a light projector ON state and second signals in a light projection OFF state. Claims 1 and 8 also require that these transfers of first and second signals from the first transfer unit are made at different timings respectively. These first and second transfer units are depicted, for example, at CCD1 and CCD2 in Fig. 5 of Applicant's drawings.

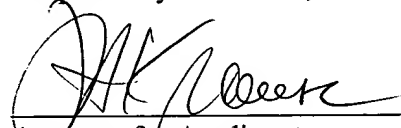
In the rejecting reference, Applicant's earlier '726 patent, a photoelectric conversion apparatus is disclosed in Fig. 6, including a transfer CCDs 96, and a ring-shaped transfer CCD which is referred to at Column 4, lines 32-34. In this regard, signals from the sensor array 91 are transferred to the CCD 96 through accumulation units 94. Each of those units 94 accumulates an OFF-state signal of a sensor block until an ON-state signal is read out from the sensor block to be next-accumulated (Pulses ST and SH in Fig. 7). Each unit 94, therefore, does not transfer sequentially therein the ON-state signals or

the OFF-state signals. Accordingly, the amended language of Claims 1 and 8 defines the first transfer unit in a manner which is patentably distinct over the '726 Egawa patent. In that reference, the CCDs 96 transfer sequentially therein the ON-state signals and the OFF-state signals to the ring-shaped CCD. However, those CCDs 96 are driven at the same period of time as described above and therefore fail to teach the relationship of transfer frequency between the first and second transfer units as required in amended independent Claims 1 and 8.

For these various reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that independent Claims 1 and 8 are allowable, together with all of the dependent claims, wherefore the issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance is solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. A. Krause', written over a horizontal line.

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